

Standing NASBO 07

Provision of Compliant Pilot Transfer Arrangements

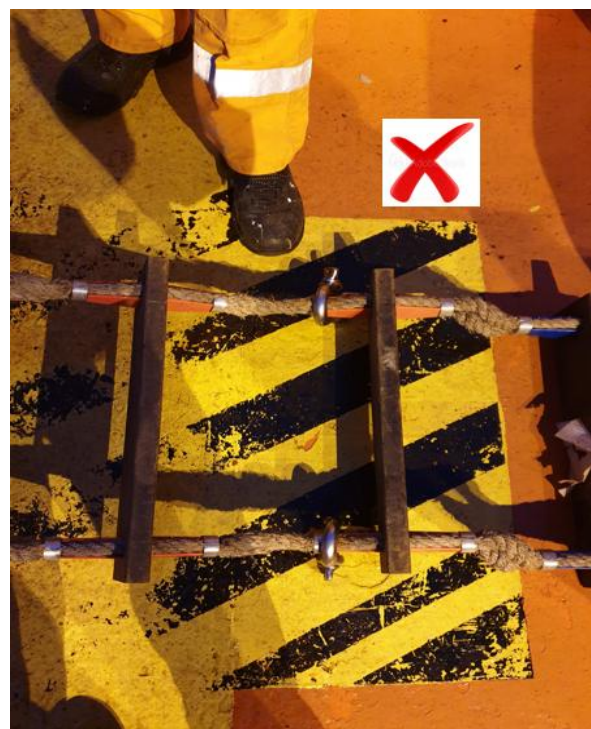
First Issued 5th January 2026 – Re-issued 13.04.2026

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that All vessels arriving into Peel Ports Medway’s area of jurisdiction requiring the services of a Medway pilot must ensure that the means of embarkation/disembarkation is deployed to national and international standards and is presented in a safe condition. Despite there being long established regulations relating to the rigging of pilot ladders the number of non-compliant and defective ladder reports received remains consistent. All occurrences of non-compliant pilot ladders are reported to the MCA and serious failings and repeat offences can lead to Port State Control (PSC) inspections.

Medway pilot’s have the right to refuse boarding of a vessel if they believe that the ladder is incorrectly rigged and poses a health hazard, this could lead to serious delays and incur additional costs.

The following are examples of common Pilot ladder defects which could lead to personal harm, delays, additional charges and potentially PSC inspections.

Pilot Ladder secured by “Choke Shackles”



Issued on behalf of Port of Sheerness Ltd, the Statutory Harbour Authority for the River Medway and The Swale
Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded at
the Peel Ports Group Port Control Centre, Liverpool.

Pilot Ladder secured by “deck tongue”



Weight of ladder taken up on spreader bar

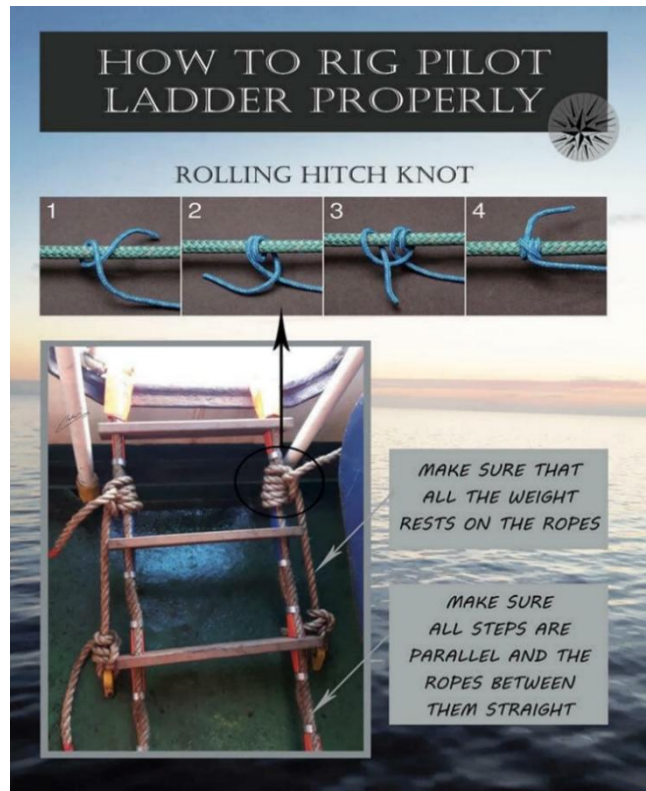


Shackles over side ropes is a commonly seen practice for securing ladders. This is an ineffective and unsafe means of securing the Pilot Ladder. Weight coming on the ladder will result in the shackles bringing up against steps, ferrules/whippings and winnets.

Steps are rated to 8kNs and Side Ropes have a breaking strength of 24kNs per side rope with a combined strength of 48kNs. This strength is lost as soon as the weight is held by a step or winnet.

IMO Res.1045 (27) 2.11

The securing strong points, shackles and securing ropes should be at least as strong as the side ropes.



Winch reels not secured mechanically and ladder not secured independently from reel using strong points.



IMO Resolution A.1045 (27) 7.5.6

7.4. Where the Pilot Ladder is stowed on a Pilot Ladder Winch Reel which is located either within the ships side opening or on the upper deck:

The Pilot Ladder Winch Reel should not be relied upon to support the pilot ladder when the pilot ladder is in use, the Pilot Ladder should be secured to a strong point independent of the Pilot Ladder Winch Reel. The Pilot Ladder should be secured at deck level inside the ship side opening or, when located on the ships upper deck, at a distance of not less than 915mm measured horizontally from the ships side inwards.



Platform placed over the securing area.



Embarkation Platform – Trapdoor System. Ladder does not extend 2m above the platform.





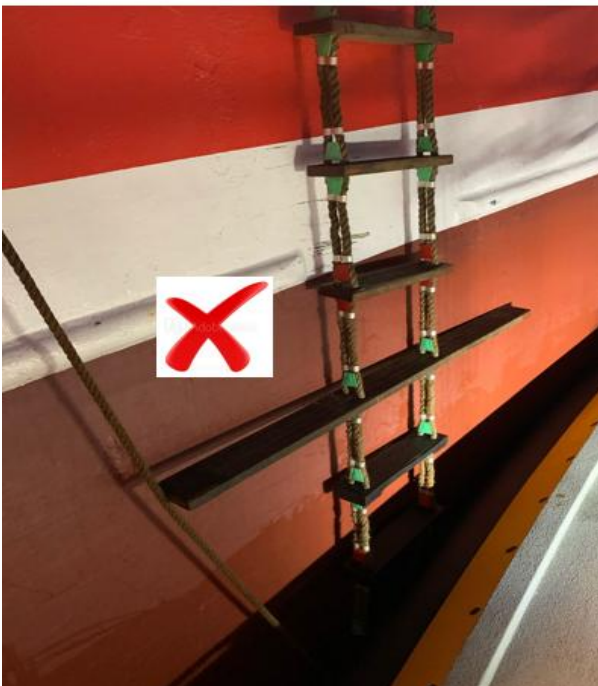
IMO Resolution A.1045 states;

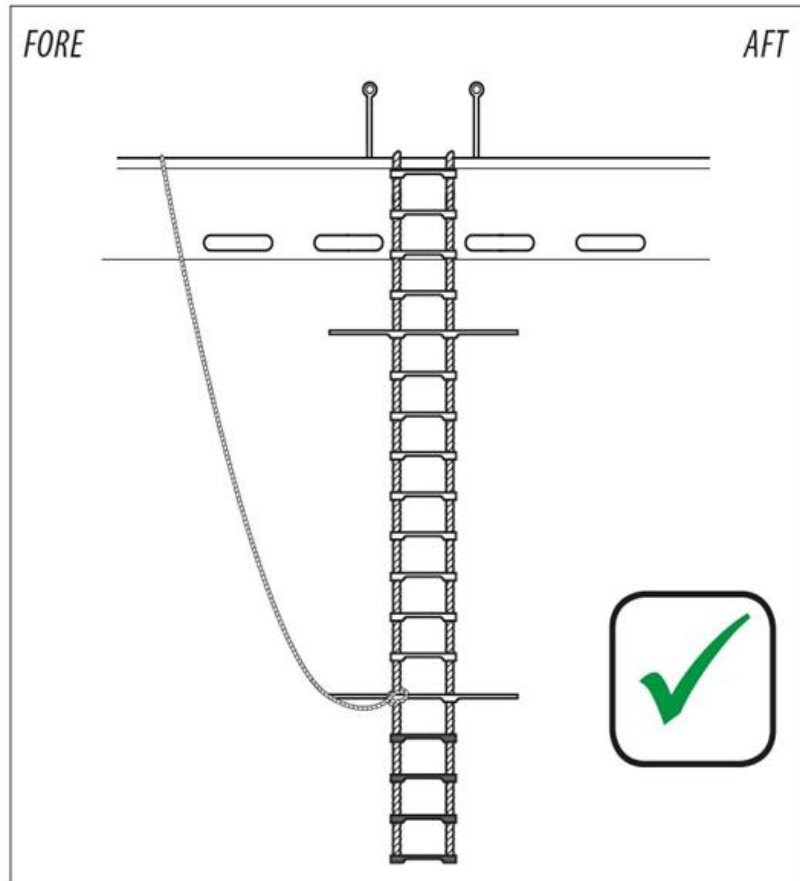
Angle of slope does not exceed 45° - Lower platform of the accommodation ladder should be in an horizontal position and secured to the ships side. - The lower platform should be a minimum of 5m above sea level.

The Pilot Ladder should be rigged immediately adjacent to the lower platform of the accommodation ladder and the upper end should extend **at least 2m above the lower platform**. The horizontal distance between the Pilot Ladder and the lower platform should be between 0.1m to 0.2m.

Trapdoor – minimum 750mm x 750mm, open upwards, secured flat or against the rails and not form part of the handholds.

Incorrect rigging of retrieval/tripping lines





Ladder is generally in a poor and unsafe state.



With immediate effect the master of any vessel subject to compulsory Pilotage is required to ensure their vessel complies with safe boarding and landing for Pilots within the Peel Ports Medway jurisdiction in accordance with the IMO Convention for Safety of Life at Sea.

Keel Laid	SOLAS Regulation	Effective Date	Invalid From
On or after 25/05/1980 Before 01/01/1994	SOLAS 1974 V/R.17	25/05/1980	In force
On or after 01/01/1994 Before 01/07/2002	SOLAS 91/92 V/R.17	01/01/1994	In force
On or after 01/07/2002 Before 01/07/2012	SOLAS 99/00 V/R.23	01/07/2002	01/07/2012 - Not in force
On or after 01/07/2012	SOLAS 10 V/R.23	01/07/2012	In force

Further information can be found in IMO Resolution A.1045(27) and the Shipping Industry Guidance on Pilot Transfer Arrangements. See also the UK Maritime Pilot’s Association interactive Pilot Transfer Arrangements poster: *

At the NSCR11 sub-committee meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee, updates were made to SOLAS Regulation V/23. These changes align with Resolution A.1045(27) and ISO 799 standards for pilot ladders. The revised rules were approved at MSC 110 in June 2025 and take effect on 1 January 2028.

While the IMO encourages early adoption, full compliance may be delayed due to practical challenges. Until then, the current SOLAS V/23 remains in force.

Maritime Pilots still have the authority under SOLAS V/23, Section 2.1, to reject unsafe or non compliant transfer arrangements. This ensures safe embarkation and disembarkation continue to follow best practices.

Once approved, the new standards will represent best practice. Reporting non-compliance now helps vessels address issues ahead of the 2028 deadline, just as many already follow existing recommended guidelines.

The [UKMPA PTA Amendments Circular](#) details these forthcoming changes and is supplemented by the [UKMPA Interactive Pilot Ladder Poster](#)

**Marine Operations Department
Peel Ports London Medway**

Notice Issued:
Notice Expiry:

13th April 2026
N/A